

GUATEMALA: REHABILITATION PROGRAMME

**appeal no: 23/97
13 November 1997**

***THIS APPEAL SEEKS CHF 3,995,000
IN CASH, KIND AND SERVICES
TO ASSIST 200,000 BENEFICIARIES FOR ONE YEAR***

Summary

Almost a year after the signing of the Peace Agreements which ended 36 years of conflict in Guatemala, the country stands at a watershed in its history. It must build a solid foundation for peace, while repairing the scars of war. Needs -- of returnees, displaced people, the demobilised and the population in general -- are enormous. The international community is committed to supporting this rehabilitation process, through direct aid and local implementing agencies.

The International Federation is seeking support for the first year of a four year rehabilitation programme drawn up by the Guatemalan Red Cross that will provide primary health care, water and sanitation, disaster preparedness and community education for 200,000 people in remote rural areas not serviced by the government or other agencies. At the same time the institutional and operational capacity of the National Society will be reinforced.

The Context

Guatemala has just emerged from 36 years of civil war -- one of the longest conflicts in Latin America and one which exacted a heavy price. One year after the peace accords, the country must still contend with tens of thousands of internally displaced, Guatemalan refugees in Mexico waiting to return home, and demobilised persons.

Guatemala is one of the poorest countries in Latin America, ranking 117th on the human development index (UNDP, 1997), and preceding only Nicaragua and Haiti in the region. Out of a total population of 10 million, 75% live in poverty; 60% live in rural areas, and 46% lack the most basic services. Birth rates are high, but infant mortality (up to five years of age) stands at 75 per

1,000 births. There is a high incidence of deaths from cholera, malaria and malnutrition. The adult literacy rate is 55.7%.

Although the conflict is officially over, violence persists and social disruption is widespread throughout the country. There is a sharp divide between the large indigenous population and the "ladinos" and the distribution of wealth is one of the most unequal in Latin America.

Guatemala is also prone to disasters. It has 30 active volcanoes, frequent earthquakes and heavy rainfall which causes serious erosion year after year. The effects of the "El Niño" phenomenon are another cause of concern for the country this year.

The Peace Process

The lengthy peace process led to a Peace Agreement, which is in fact a set of ten agreements, covering socio-economic, cultural, human rights and democratic issues, the last of which was signed on 29 December 1996. Immediately after the signature, demobilisation started and refugees and displaced people began returning to their homes.

The peace process was considered exemplary and won accolades for the government and ex-guerrilla negotiators. It has raised high expectations in the country and has attracted the interest and support of the international community. At a meeting of the Consultative Group of international institutions and donor countries organised by the Interamerican Development Bank in Brussels in January pledges were made of USD 1,900 million for the period 1997-2000 and these were confirmed at a further meeting in Antigua, Guatemala in mid-September. Participants in the meetings stressed the interrelationship of peace, democracy and development and urged Guatemala to contribute through a fiscal reform programme, the institutionalisation of human rights and other conditions included in the agreement.

Some donors voiced concern about the ability of Guatemala's government, institutions and civil organisations to implement the peace programme fully and use international aid efficiently. In the Federation's meetings with donors and Guatemalan institutions the importance of a strong National Society able to provide services to the vulnerable population and to act as an efficient counterpart in international co-operation efforts was repeatedly stressed. Equally important is the Society's educational function through its dissemination of the humanitarian message of the Movement and its role as an institution of public trust, because of its respect of the Fundamental Principles of the Movement.

The Guatemalan Red Cross

The National Society stands on the threshold of an exceptional opportunity, but is just emerging from a serious institutional crisis. After suspending most of its activities and closing its headquarters in late 1992, it began a slow recovery, supported by the recommendations of the Study on the Future Role of the Red Cross in Latin America and the Caribbean and backed by the Federation's San Jose Regional Delegation. In 1996 the Federation posted a development delegate to Guatemala and the main points for the institutional recovery of the National Society -- statutory reform, new programmes and the development of human resources -- were identified.

New statutes were approved during a General Assembly in July 1996, with strong Branch participation, and ratified by the Guatemalan government in March 1997. A new President and a new National Council were elected in June 1997.

Throughout the crisis many branches managed to continue functioning. In late 1996 all the branches were visited and their situation analysed. A planning commission was created at an institutional development seminar in December 1996 and has since organised workshops, at both headquarters

and branch level. In September 1997, at a meeting with donors and Guatemalan institutions, the National Society presented its rehabilitation programme.

The Intended Operation

The Guatemalan Red Cross has committed itself to carry out a four-year rehabilitation programme. A framework plan and budget has been established for the four years; detailed yearly plans and budgets will be drawn up and adjusted as the programme moves forward.

The Programme is made up of two components:

- **Human development Project** Its objective is to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable population through programmes of primary health, disaster preparedness, water and sanitation and community development, which strengthen the capacities of the communities themselves.
- **Capacity Building Project** The project's aim is to strengthen the capacity of the National Society to assume responsibility and carry out its mission at this crucial moment.

Capacity of the National Society •

The Guatemalan Red Cross (GRC) has 21 recognised branches. Some are extremely weak; others have activities related to health, disaster response, first aid, blood donation, youth, and water and sanitation projects. In Guatemala City the main activity is medical assistance.

The National Society, recovering from a long crisis (see above), is still limited in its capacity, at headquarters and operationally. A National Development Plan, which will clarify the mission and priorities of the GRC, is being drawn up under the co-ordination of the Planning Commission.

In the meantime, the GRC is working on the following priorities: to enlarge its programmes for vulnerable groups, develop its human resources, improve its economic situation and financial management, extend its presence to the entire country and improve its public image.

Capacity of the Federation •

The Regional Delegation of the Federation will transfer its offices from San Jose, Costa Rica, to Guatemala this month, in order to offer maximum support to the Guatemalan Red Cross.

Several Federation missions have taken place this year, supported by some PNS, to help the National Society formulate its Rehabilitation Programme. In June, a donors meeting was held in Geneva to report on progress. A Programme Co-ordinator has been appointed who will be part of a support team for the GRC, together with the Development Delegate and other potential delegates from PNS.

Several National Societies have expressed their interest in supporting this programme and some have already started activities. The Spanish Red Cross has implemented a large project in aid of demobilised people, with financial support from ECHO and in co-operation with the ICRC, and has voiced interest in contributing to this appeal. The German Red Cross and the Netherlands Red Cross have sent delegates or consultants to prepare projects, in close co-ordination with the Federation delegates. The Swedish and Norwegian Red Cross Societies assisted the mission that helped prepare the Rehabilitation Programme and intend to continue their support.

Throughout, a continuous sharing of information and collaboration has taken place between the Guatemalan Red Cross, the International Federation, the ICRC and participating National Societies.

Plan of Action

1. Human Development Project

This project focuses on the most urgent needs in service areas where the Red Cross has specific capacity or where there is no effective action by the government, other agencies or NGOs. These areas are:

Primary Health Care
Disaster Preparedness and Prevention
Clean water and sanitation
Microprojects for Community Development
Community Education.

These projects will target difficult to reach rural zones where there are major needs and where neither the government nor NGOs can provide the same services. They will begin in municipalities in the departments of Alta Verapaz, Quetzaltenango and Huehuetenango, where Red Cross branches already have the requisite operational capacity.

The projects are designed to assist communities where displaced, returnees, demobilised people and the general population suffer similar needs. The main focus is on the development of the communities themselves and their Red Cross branches, so that they can provide all the basic services.

The first year will concentrate on assisting a total of 200,000 persons: 40,000 persons in 160 communities in the Department of Alta Verapaz, 60,000 in 240 communities in Quetzaltenango, 40,000 persons in 160 communities in Coatepeque (Quetzaltenango) 25,000 in 100 communities in Huehuetenango and 35,000 in other departments.

Over the four year period the number of beneficiaries will increase as the capacity of the National Society grows and the projects take in other departments.

Primary Health Care

This component will begin in the communities of Cobán (Alta Verapaz) Xela y Coatepeque (Quetzaltenango), extending at the beginning of the second year to Huehuetenango. These communities have been identified as in the greatest need.

Community Based Health Care (CBHC) and Community Based First Aid (CBFA) will be provided through a network of "health agents" (promoters and volunteers). Mobile health teams in each branch will co-ordinate the work of the health agents and supervise their training, besides treating emergency cases. The project foresees a dispensary and community pharmacies in each branch. The Red Cross branches will ensure the management of the projects and the training of Red Cross volunteers as well as providing local transport and other facilities.

Disaster Preparedness

This component will begin in the communities of Coatepeque, Quetzaltenango, Cobán (Alta Verapaz) and Huehuetenango, because they are vulnerable, high risk areas. It will provide community level education and organise and equip the branches to respond quickly to emergencies and mitigate their effect. A map of the risk areas in each community will be prepared.

The project includes training in disaster preparedness and prevention, first aid, rescue, management of temporary shelters and dealing with the most common accidents in daily life. Over the four year period it will be extended to all 21 branches in the country. Branches are expected to provide 50 percent of the transport, lodging food and other costs of the training.

Clean Water and Sanitation

This component will begin in the first year in San Juan Ostuncalco and Chiquipula (Quetzaltenango) and el Troje in Coatepeque (Quetzaltenango) and La Democracia (Huehuetenango). These communities lack clean water and sanitation and have a high rate of water borne disease. Clean water will be supplied to families and schools. Construction of latrines will begin in La Democracia. The project includes training in the repair and maintenance of water supply systems to ensure that the communities are able to manage and maintain the project, while respecting the environment. Wells and storage tanks will be drilled and water distribution networks repaired. The project will be extended to other communities.

Community Education

This component focuses on preparing communities for their participation in the technical projects and, at the same time, will familiarise them with the principles and ideals of the Red Cross. Special attention will be paid to the education and mobilisation of young people as they are an important element of the reconciliation that must take place as part of the Peace Process. The Guatemalan Red Cross dissemination project is supported by the ICRC and will be closely co-ordinated with all other related activities.

2. Capacity Building Project

This project will continue the strengthening of the capacity of the Guatemalan Red Cross to function efficiently and to effectively carry out programmes and services to the population.

This project is made up of components already identified by the GRC Planning Commission. They cover: increasing the operational capacity of the National Society; recruitment and training of volunteers; financial and administrative management; and resource development and image.

a) Operational Systems

1. Emergency and Disaster Response

This will create a nation-wide corps of relief workers, able to provide rescue and relief services in emergencies. It will establish three teams in the first year and twenty in the following three years.

2. Telecommunications System

A network covering the whole country, compatible with the systems currently in use in the National Societies in the region, will be set up.

3. Transport network

This will start in four strategic regions in the first year and will be operational in all 21 branches one year later.

b) Human Resources

4. National Training System

This will promote the recruitment and training of volunteers and training courses for the general public in Guatemala City and in the branches.

5. Youth Programmes:

To reinforce the Youth Red Cross, in-school programmes will be developed, focusing on first aid, primary health education, AIDS prevention and training in the principles and ideals of the Red Cross.

c) Management System

6. Planning and Financial System:

The evaluation of needs and capabilities, begun by the Planning Commission, will continue. The elaboration of the National Development Plan will be an essential priority. The introduction of training in planning and programming methodology in the branches will be reinforced. An evaluation and an audit will be conducted in order to carry out improvements in accounting, budgeting, and financial reporting at national and branch levels and so win public trust and loyalty.

d) Resource Development and Image:

7. Resource Development

This will build up a resource development system in order to assure the sustainability of the National Society at national and branch level.

8. Image and Communications:

The public image of the Guatemalan Red Cross has to be reshaped and reinforced. A Communications department will be created in the National Society's HQ and a monthly newsletter will be published. A GRC dissemination project is being supported by the ICRC. The efforts of the GRC, the ICRC, and the Federation for this entire project will be carefully co-ordinated.

Budget summary

The total budget of the programme for four years is 11.9 million Swiss Francs. The amount sought by this appeal for the first year is disproportionately high, but it should be borne in mind that this year includes a lot of start up costs. The budget is presented in detail in Annex 1.

Conclusion

Both Guatemala and the Guatemalan Red Cross are at a historic turning point. But the Guatemalan Red Cross needs help if it is to seize this unique opportunity to make a contribution to peace by providing assistance to the most needy communities, in keeping with the specific role of the Red Cross Red Crescent and its fundamental principles.

Support now will also ensure a solid, credible role for the National Society in the future. Several National Societies and donor agencies have shown their interest in supporting this process. The Federation has already established a team that is working with the Guatemalan Red Cross and co-ordinating and facilitating the action of participating National Societies. The Federation's Regional Delegation in Guatemala will provide further support. Donors are urged to respond immediately to this appeal so that current and planned initiatives to ensure Red Cross participation in reconciliation and rehabilitation in Guatemala can go ahead.

Detailed projects and programme proposals are available upon request. For further information, please contact Desk Officer Jan Schuett, Tel (00 41 22) 73 04 428, or the Director of the Americas Department, Santiago Gil, Tel (00 41 22) 73 04 391.

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